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MEN WHO MIGHT HAVE BEEN PRESIDENTS.

BY JOSEPH M. ROGERS.

THE twenty-eighth Presidential election will take place in November. Six months ago it was generally conceded that the Republicans would elect their candidate by a very large majority. While Republicans are still confident, and the State elections of the past three years tend to confirm their belief, recent political events have made the result fairly debatable. Indeed nothing is more uncertain than a Presidential election at any time, and prophecies of political wiseacres are worth little. Four years ago in April there was a general feeling that a Republican would be elected, and this lasted well into the campaign. But Mr. Cleveland was elected by an immense majority in the Electoral College. So great was that majority that it seemed as if the Republican party had gone to pieces, and few scanned carefully the popular vote, which showed that Cleveland only had a minority and not a great many more votes than the Republican candidate.

The Presidential elections of the past are especially worth study at the present time. Few of them were foregone conclusions, and at a time when in theory electors could exercise their personal choice, and when a Congressional caucus dictated nominations, there were some surprising results, and a number of men narrowly escaped the Presidency.

In the Constitutional Convention of 1787 no important question received so little attention as the manner of electing the President. A number of impracticable propositions were put forward. The matter was referred to a select committee, which reported the Electoral College system as detailed in Article II., Section I., of the Constitution. This was accepted almost without debate or dissent. It was intended that this college of wise

men should pick out the best men for the two offices, and be entirely unfettered in its choice. Curiously enough this feature was the most popular when the Constitution was published, and it has proved the most unsatisfactory. It was amended during Jefferson's administration, but is still the most undesirable feature of the Constitution. The Constitution provides that electors shall be appointed as the Legislatures of each State shall direct. At the beginning the electors were chosen by the Legislature, and South Carolina continued to do so down to the Civil War. Some States early provided for the popular election of the electors by districts, while others adopted the State ticket plan, which is now practised in every State. In 1892 Michigan voted by districts, but the law therefor has been repealed.

Washington was unanimously chosen President in 1789. Only ten States were represented in the College. Rhode Island and North Carolina had not ratified the Constitution, and New York's Legislature had made no provision for appointing electors. Two electors from Maryland and two from Virginia did not vote. In 1792 Washington received the votes of 132 electors from the fifteen States, but again two electors from Maryland and one from Vermont did not vote.

The canvass of 1796 was one of the most exciting in our history. Party lines had by this time become clearly drawn. John Adams was the logical Federalist candidate, but he was somewhat in the position of Benjamin Harrison four years ago. Some of the leaders of the party disliked him. They wanted a candidate they could manage after election, much as certain politicians do to-day. They concluded to take up a Southern candidate for Vice-President, and while the Federal electors North were to vote equally for the two candidates, it was hoped in the South that personal popularity would give the Vice-President enough votes to elect him President. It is to be remembered that at that time the electors simply voted for two persons without naming either for President or Vice-President, and the one receiving the highest, if a majority, was elected President. Thomas Pinckney, of South Carolina, was selected as the ostensible candidate for Vice-President in the hope of pulling him through for first place. Adams soon learned of the plan, and his New England friends in the Electoral College frustrated it by scattering the vote for second place. When the vote was cast Adams had

71 votes ; Jefferson, 68 ; Pinckney, 59, while 78 were scattered. Pinckney lost 5 votes from Connecticut ; 3 from Maryland ; 3 from Massachusetts ; 6 from New Hampshire ; and gained 1 from Pennsylvania over the vote for Adams, while South Carolina gave him her 8 votes, but supported Jefferson also. If the Federalists had all voted for Pinckney he would have been elected President in place of Adams. This was the first real test of the electoral system, and it made a sensation. Indeed it was declared that two electors chosen in the interest of Jefferson voted for Adams. While there could be no legal objection to electors voting for whom they pleased, it was considered a breach of trust to do so.

In 1800 there was another exciting contest. Adams was still personally unpopular with Federalist politicians, and the game of 1796 was tried again. This time the Federalists took up Charles C. Pinckney, of South Carolina, a relative of Thomas, for Vice-President. In Pennsylvania the two branches of the Legislature were deadlocked, and a compromise was effected, by which Jefferson got 8 votes, and Adams 7. Could Adams have received all the votes he would have been elected. Maryland could have elected him with her solid vote, but here the district system prevailed. The expectation was that South Carolina would give eight votes each to Jefferson and Pinckney as in 1796, but this failed, and Burr got the second choice votes. To prevent a Federalist tie a Rhode Island elector voted for John Jay instead of Pinckney. Had the Federalist plans gone through, Jefferson and Pinckney would each have had 73 votes. The actual result was :

Jefferson.....	73
Burr.....	73
Adams.....	65
Pinckney.....	64
Jay.....	1

Thus there was a tie between Jefferson and Burr instead of between Jefferson and Pinckney. Then followed days of political plotting disgraceful to the nation. Although Jefferson was easily first choice, Burr was not inclined to concede it, and resolved to stand on his rights as a candidate. The Federalists controlled both branches of Congress, and a number of plans were put forward to defeat Jefferson, now that the Pinckney plot had failed. A Federal caucus decided to elect Burr if pos-

sible, making the best bargain possible for Federalism in future. But Bayard of Delaware, who cast the vote of his State, refused to abide by the caucus decision, and three other members followed him. A plan was proposed to keep up the contest until after the 4th of March, and in the meantime pass a law by which a Federalist President could hold over. But this was not well received, as it was revolutionary in principle, and, in any event, a second election would result in Jefferson's triumph. In the meantime balloting began in the House, each State delegation casting but one vote, according to the Constitution. Thirty-five ballots were taken without result. Jefferson had eight States; Burr six; and in two States the delegation was equally divided. This was the unvarying result from February 11 to 17. In the meantime the attempt to draw out Burr went on, but the longer it proceeded the more unsatisfactory were the results, and the Federalists finally concluded that Jefferson was the safer man. On the thirty-sixth ballot the contest was decided by a number of Federalists casting blank votes. The result was:

For Jefferson—Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Vermont and Virginia—10 States.

For Burr—Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island—4 States.

Blank—Delaware and South Carolina.

Thus under the original method of electing Presidents, Thomas Pinckney, Charles C. Pinckney and Aaron Burr might have been elected, not one of whom was a candidate for the office. The Constitution was amended in 1804 so as to prevent any such perversion of the popular will, by providing that electors should vote separately for President and Vice-President.

In 1804 Jefferson had a walk-over. The only votes cast against him were: Connecticut, 9; Delaware, 3; Maryland, 2—all for Charles C. Pinckney.

In 1808 Madison had a large majority. Charles C. Pinckney received only 47 votes, while Madison had 122. George Clinton had a slightly smaller vote for the second place.

By 1812 the Federalist party had disappeared from national view, and Madison received 128 votes against 89 for DeWitt Clinton, the latter carrying Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode Island,

and five of the eleven votes from Maryland. The contest was much closer than the figures show. The war question was then ripe, and there was great dissatisfaction over the Congressional caucus nomination of Madison, while all over the country there was a feeling that Virginia was getting an undeserved monopoly of the Presidency. Embargo and the war question were the main issues. Had Pennsylvania supported Clinton and a peace policy, he would have been elected. This was not expected, but the Clintonians did expect North Carolina and either Vermont or Ohio. They failed unexpectedly, and another man who might have been President retired to State politics.

In 1816 Monroe carried every State, except Connecticut, Delaware and Massachusetts, whose 34 votes were cast for Rufus King. In 1820 Monroe received every vote cast but one from New Hampshire, which was given to John Quincy Adams. It was said that this elector wished no man to share the honor of unanimous election with Washington.

In 1824 took place one of the most interesting elections in our history, and one that is unique. Of four candidates, all nominally Republicans, none had a majority. The House then balloted, each State casting a vote, between the three highest on the list. The electoral vote was:

Jackson.....	99
John Quincy Adams.....	84
Crawford.....	41
Clay.....	37

131 being a majority. Adams was easily the best equipped man for the place, and his public services should have insured him the honor. But he was a poor hand in practical politics, and failed to make combinations that would have insured him success. When the House came to ballot, Clay had thrown his support to Adams, not, as now seems certain, as a result of a bargain for the portfolio of State, but the fact that he did receive that reward was made the basis of the scandal that stuck to Clay for many years. On the first ballot Adams received the vote of thirteen States, Jackson of seven, and Crawford of four. The vote did not follow entirely the decision as given by the States at the election, as there was no obligation that it should, the House having been elected in 1822. Of the States that voted for Jackson, he received the vote in the House of all but Illinois, Louisiana, Maryland and North Carolina. The three former

supported Adams, and the last Crawford. Adams in addition to the States he carried wholly or more than half in the Electoral College, received the votes of Kentucky, Missouri and Ohio in addition to the three States captured from Jackson.

At this election the States in which the people choose electors were more numerous than ever before. Of the popular vote Jackson received 155,872; Adams, 105,321; Crawford, 44,282, and Clay, 46,587. This, however, was a small portion of the voting population. John Quincy Adams was the only President who received a smaller popular and electoral vote than his leading rival. In 1828 Jackson had a greater majority in the Electoral College than Adams had votes, viz. :

Jackson.....	178
Adams.....	83

But where a popular vote was taken there was no such disproportion. Jackson received 647,231 votes, while Adams received 509,097. At this election fewer Legislatures chose electors than ever before. Nearly one-half the qualified voters voted directly for electors, so that Adams' showing was by no means contemptible, and but for the Clay scandal and his peculiar temperament he might have been re-elected.

In 1832 Jackson was triumphantly re-elected, receiving 219 votes to 49 for Clay; 11 for Floyd, 7 for Wirt and two vacancies. But the electoral vote was again no criterion of the popularity of the men. The popular vote stood :

Jackson.....	687,502
Clay.....	530,189

with 33,108 divided between the other candidates. The proportion was nearly the same as between Jackson and Adams in 1828.

In 1836 Martin Van Buren, the political legatee of Jackson was elected by a large electoral majority, the vote standing :

Van Buren.....	170
Harrison.....	73
White.....	26
Webster.....	14
Mangum.....	11

But on the popular vote Van Buren received 761,549, while the combined opposition cast 736,656. Van Buren owed his election chiefly to his enemies. When Jackson was foiled in his attempt to make society receive the wife of Secretary Eaton, a reconstruction of the Cabinet became necessary. Van Buren resigned and was sent as Minister to England. When the election

of 1832 came on Jackson had broken with Calhoun, and had determined on some one else as a running mate. While Van Buren may have been his choice, it would not have been politic to recall him from the mission he had just begun, and the President was in a quandary. But the Senate was opposed to Jackson; and Calhoun, Webster and Clay resolved to give the administration a slap in the face. Van Buren had been sent abroad during a recess, and when his name was sent for confirmation the Senate rejected it. This meanness brought its just reward, for Van Buren came home, was triumphantly elected Vice-President, and presided over the body that had so recently rejected him. His succession to the Presidency followed, but this would hardly have been the case but for the attempt of his enemies to disgrace him.

In 1840 William Henry Harrison was elected President in the first hurrah campaign in our history. He received 234 electoral votes to Van Buren's 60. The popular vote stood :

Harrison.....	1,275,017
Van Buren.....	1,128,702
Birney.....	7,059

James G. Birney was the candidate of the Liberty party pledged to abolish slavery. Harrison's early death brought to the Presidency John Tyler, who wrecked his party, and provided politics with a term of contempt. Tyler was an accident. The National Convention met at Harrisburg, Pa., in December, 1839. Clay was the leading candidate, and would have been nominated if the ballot had been taken by polling the Convention by delegates, but the Convention adopted a rule requiring each State delegation to choose a candidate, and vote as a unit. Under this ruling Harrison was nominated. Among Clay's ardent supporters was John Tyler, of Virginia, who was so chagrined over the defeat of his chief that he wept bitter tears. The Convention was desirous of placating Clay's friends, and seizing on these tears as evidence of warmest personal and political friendship. Tyler was nominated for Vice-President. It seems likely from all reports that the choice would have fallen on John M. Clayton, of Delaware, but for those tears. If Clayton had been President instead of Tyler, how different might have been the history of the Whig party !

In 1844 Tyler's perfidy made Whig success impossible, and James K. Polk, the first Presidential dark horse, was elected by

an electoral vote of 170 to 105 for Clay. But the popular vote was closer, viz.:

Polk.....	1,337,243
Clay.....	1,299,068
Birney.....	62,300

Thus of the popular vote cast Polk failed of a majority. But Polk's nomination was an accident. At the Democratic Convention in Baltimore Van Buren was the leading candidate. He led for several ballots, having a majority, but not the necessary two-thirds. But by the seventh ballot his support began to go to Cass, who would probably have been nominated but for adjournment. A combination was made over night, and Polk was nominated next day. But for this totally unprecedented move in politics either Clay or Cass would have been elected President, with chances in favor of Clay. Neither ever won that goal.

In 1848 Zachary Taylor was elected President by 163 electoral votes to 127 for Cass. The popular vote stood :

Taylor.....	1,360,101
Cass.....	1,220,544
Van Buren.....	291,263

Taylor thus fell short of a popular majority, and would not have been elected at all but for the Free Soil diversion under the rejected candidate for the Democratic nomination in 1844. Van Buren did not get a single electoral vote, but he prevented Cass from carrying New York, and this elected Taylor. But Taylor's nomination was a political surprise. He was the first President absolutely without experience in civil affairs, and only his military renown gave him finally the nomination over Clay. Again did Clay and Cass, the logical candidates, fail of the Presidency by unforeseen political complications. In this contest Webster threw away the only chance he ever had for the Presidency. He was offered the nomination for second place but refused it. Had he accepted he would have succeeded Taylor at the latter's death, and such were his conservative views that he might have been elected in 1852 if he had lived, which is quite probable, as his death is supposed to have been hastened by his political disappointments.

In 1852 Franklin Pierce was elected President by 254 electoral votes to 42 for Winfield Scott. The popular vote stood:

Pierce.....	1,601,474
Scott.....	1,386,578
Hale.....	156,149

Pierce had a small plurality of the popular vote. But Pierces' nomination was again the result of convention machinery, and not of popular favor. At the Democratic Convention in 1852 at Baltimore, Cass, Buchanan, Marcy and Douglas were the chief candidates. But for the two-thirds rule Cass would again have been nominated, but another dark horse in the person of Pierce was trotted out, thus preventing the popular choice between Cass and Scott at the polls. There is little doubt that Cass would have won this year.

In 1856 James Buchanan was elected President by an electoral vote of 174 to 114 for Fremont, and 8 for Fillmore. Pennsylvania and New Jersey turned the scale for Buchanan. The popular vote stood :

Buchanan.....	1,838,169
Fremont.....	1,341,264
Fillmore.....	874,534

Again the successful candidate received a minority of the popular vote.

Abraham Lincoln was chosen President in 1860 by an electoral vote of 180 to 72 for Breckinridge, 39 for Bell, and 12 for Douglas. The popular vote stood :

Lincoln.....	1,857,610
Douglas.....	1,365,976
Breckinridge.....	847,953
Bell.....	590,631

Lincoln was in a large minority. Particularly conspicuous is the disproportion between Douglas' popular vote and his twelve votes in the Electoral College. Abraham Lincoln's nomination was unexpected in the East. How it was accomplished has been told too frequently to require repeating here. Seward was his chief competitor, and there is no reason now to believe he would not have been elected if nominated, as was anticipated by his friends.

Leading men in the Union party movement have claimed that the election of Lincoln was largely due to the diversion of Bell and Everett votes in the South from Breckinridge. This on its face is not demonstrated, as the Breckinridge and Bell votes, together with the States which the latter saved to Lincoln, would not have elected Breckinridge. The further claim is made, however, that the Bell and Everett ticket strengthened Lincoln, because it kept many Northern people from supporting the Southern candidate as they had done in 1856, believing that a

compromise with the South was essential to the preservation of the Union. There is some merit in this claim. Lincoln had the smallest percentage of the popular vote of any President ever chosen by the Electoral College. He was triumphantly re-elected in 1864, but Johnson was an accident. The nomination for Vice-President was offered to General Benjamin F. Butler, who declined it.

Grant was twice overwhelmingly elected, but there were vacancies in the Electoral College each time. The Hayes-Tilden contest is too recent to need reviewing. But Blaine would probably have been nominated in 1876 had not the gas been turned off in the Convention Hall. Garfield, who was the darkest of dark horses, owed his election to the efforts of Grant and Conkling, Arthur became President solely through the favor of Conkling, who secured his nomination as Vice-President. General Butler in his memoirs says that thousands of votes cast for him in New York in 1884 were counted for Cleveland. If true, Mr. Blaine was really elected, as the Democratic majority in the State was only about 1,200. Blaine could have been nominated almost without opposition in 1888, and possibly could have been elected, thus, like Clay and Cass, narrowly missing the Presidency three times.

This account shows that the following men came within an ace of the Presidency: Thomas Pinckney, Charles C. Pinckney, Aaron Burr, DeWitt Clinton, Henry Clay, John M. Clayton, Daniel Webster, Lewis Cass, Benjamin F. Butler, James G. Blaine, and Samuel J. Tilden.

These Presidents were either accidents of politics or barely gained election: John Adams, Thomas Jefferson (first term), James Madison (second term), John Quincy Adams, Martin Van Buren, William Henry Harrison, John Tyler, James K. Polk, Zachary Taylor, Millard Fillmore, Franklin Pierce, Abraham Lincoln (first term), Andrew Johnson, Rutherford B. Hayes, James A. Garfield, Chester A. Arthur, Benjamin Harrison (owing to Blaine's declination), and Grover Cleveland (first election).

Indeed, the only Presidents ever elected who were the leading choice of their party before nomination were: Washington, Jefferson, Madison (first term), Monroe, Jackson, Lincoln (second term), Grant, and Cleveland (second term).

In the thirteen Presidential elections since 1840 a winning candidate for the Presidency has but once polled 50 per cent. of the whole vote excluding the three elections 1864-72, when some of the States did not vote. The exception was Pierce who polled 50.9 per cent. William Henry Harrison polled less than 53 per cent., but would have had less than 50 per cent. probably, had South Carolina chosen electors at the polls. In 1836 Van Buren polled 50.83 per cent., but the Tribune Almanac estimated a Whig majority of 30,000 in South Carolina, which would have put him below 50 per cent.

The Electoral College is based on 357 units of population, to which are added 90 units representing states, or 447 in all, thus the voter casts on an average about $1\frac{1}{2}$ votes. In the next election there will be 447 electoral votes cast. Fifteen states have no more than four votes. These represent about six per cent. of the population, and twelve per cent. of the electoral votes. Thus each voter casts 2 votes instead of $1\frac{1}{2}$. Illinois with a slightly greater population casts only 24 electoral votes, or less than 6 per cent. of the whole. New York and Missouri cast the same number of votes as the fifteen small States, but represent 14 per cent. of the population. Wyoming casts $\frac{1}{148}$ of the electoral vote, but represents less than one-thousandth of the population, so that each voter has practically seven votes, making no account of the female vote. The following table shows the figures above given (Utah is included as it votes this year) :

	Electoral Vote.	Population. 1890.
Colorado.....	4	412,198
Delaware.....	3	168,493
Florida.....	4	391,422
Idaho.....	3	84,385
Montana.....	3	132,159
Nevada.....	3	45,761
New Hampshire.....	4	376,530
North Dakota.....	3	132,719
Oregon.....	4	313,767
Rhode Island.....	4	345,506
South Dakota.....	4	328,808
Vermont.....	4	332,422
Washington.....	4	349,390
Wyoming.....	3	60,705
Utah.....	3	207,905
53—about 12%.		3,732,170—about 6%.
Illinois.....	24	“ 6% 3,826,351 “ 6%.
New York.....	36	5,997,853
Missouri.....	17	2,679,184
53 = 12%.		8,677,037 = 14%.

The election this year will be peculiar in many respects. While the Republicans have, in the last three years, carried thirty-four States, representing 344 electoral votes, and the Democracy has retained only nine States casting eighty-nine votes, the chances this fall do not run in this ratio. Many cool-headed politicians think the Democratic party has a good chance to win under certain conditions. This table will be found interesting in making computations :

	Electoral Vote.	Electoral Vote. 1892.			Since 1892. State Elections.		
		D.	R.	P.	D.	R.	P.
Alabama.....	11	11	..	..	11	..	..
Arkansas.....	8	8	..	..	8	..	..
California.....	9	8	1	..	..	9	..
Colorado.....	4	..	..	4	..	4	..
Connecticut.....	6	6	..	..	..	6	..
Delaware.....	3	3	..	..	..	3	..
Florida.....	4	4	..	..	4	..	..
Georgia.....	13	13	..	..	13	..	..
Idaho.....	3	..	..	3	..	3	..
Illinois.....	24	24	..	..	..	24	..
Indiana.....	15	15	..	..	..	15	..
Iowa.....	13	..	13	..	..	13	..
Kansas.....	10	..	..	10	..	10	..
Kentucky.....	13	13	..	..	..	13	..
Louisiana.....	8	8	..	..	8	..	..
Maine.....	6	..	6	..	..	6	..
Maryland.....	8	8	..	..	..	8	..
Massachusetts.....	15	..	15	..	..	15	..
Michigan.....	14	5	9	..	..	14	..
Minnesota.....	9	..	9	..	..	9	..
Mississippi.....	9	9	..	..	9	..	..
Missouri.....	17	17	..	..	..	17	..
Montana.....	3	..	3	..	..	3	..
Nebraska.....	8	..	8	..	..	8	..
Nevada.....	3	..	..	3	..	..	*3
New Hampshire.....	4	..	4	..	..	4	..
New Jersey.....	10	10	..	..	..	10	..
New York.....	36	36	..	..	..	36	..
North Carolina.....	11	11	..	..	..	..	+11
North Dakota.....	3	1	1	1	..	3	..
Ohio.....	23	1	22	..	..	23	..
Oregon.....	4	..	3	1	..	4	..
Pennsylvania.....	32	..	32	..	..	32	..
Rhode Island.....	4	..	4	..	..	4	..
South Carolina.....	9	9	..	..	9	..	..
South Dakota.....	4	..	4	..	..	4	..
Tennessee.....	12	12	..	..	..	12	..
Texas.....	15	15	..	..	15	..	..
Utah.....	3	..	..	..	..	3	..
Vermont.....	4	..	4	..	..	4	..
Virginia.....	12	12	..	..	12	..	..
Washington.....	4	..	4	..	..	4	..
West Virginia.....	6	6	..	..	..	6	..
Wisconsin.....	12	12	..	..	..	12	..
Wyoming.....	3	..	3	..	..	3	..
Totals.....	447	277	145	22	89	344	14

* Free Silver Party. † Fusion with Republicans.

	Popular vote in 1892.	Percentage.
Cleveland	5,556,562	45.73
Harrison.....	5,162,874	42.49
Weaver.....	1,055,424	8.67
Bidwell.....	264,066	2.17
Wing.....	22,613	.94

The contest for the Presidency will be unusually interesting this year at the nominating conventions as well as at the polls. For twenty years past until now Blaine has been a candidate at every Republican National Convention with or without his consent. John Sherman has also been a leading candidate several times. This year the Republican candidates are practically new men. Though votes have been cast for Allison and McKinley neither has previously been an important factor in the situation. In the last five Republican Conventions the field has beaten the favorite every time, except in 1892.

The Democratic candidate is more uncertain than the Republican. While the Republican party has by odds the best of the situation, so many elements enter into the problem that Democratic hopes are not without a basis.

So many surprises have taken place at political conventions and at the polls that he is a rash man who dares predict who will be the next President.

JOSEPH M. ROGERS.